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TAGS: PREL IAEA EAID PGOV KDEM KZ

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN - DAS KROL DISCUSSES IAEA BOG, MADRID COMMITMENTS, REGIONAL ISSUES WITH SENIOR MFA OFFICIALS

Classified By: Pol-Econ Chief Steven H. Fagin, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) In a July 22 meeting in Astana, SCA DAS George Krol stressed to DFM Kairat Sarybai the urgency of Kazakhstan's moving forward on its candidacy for the MESA seat on the IAEA Board of Governors (BOG). Sarybai said he has heard from Vienna that most of the Arab members of the MESA group have reached a consensus on supporting Syria. Krol responded that this was not the case; there is no consensus on Syria's candidacy. Sarybai responded that the Kazakhstani government is still weighing the pros and cons and a final decision on Kazakhstan's candidacy could not be taken until FM Tazhin returns from leave at the beginning of August. He explained that Kazakhstan is hesitant to run for the BOG because this may compromise its relations with Arab countries.

¶2. (C) Krol informed Sarybai that SCA Assistant Secretary Boucher would be appearing in front of the Helsinki Commission of Congress on July 22 to discuss Kazakhstan's progress toward meeting its Madrid commitments on democratic reform and the recent OSCE Parliamentary Assembly session in Astana. Sarybai said that he understands the importance of fulfilling the commitments that FM Tazhin made in Madrid; however, the initiative for reforms is driven by Kazakhstan's own interests and will proceed at a pace determined by domestic factors. Sarybai did note, however, that Kazakhstan's 2010 OSCE chairmanship provides further impetus for Kazakhstan to move forward on democratic reforms.

¶3. (C) Krol and Sarybai also discussed stability in Central Asia. Sarybai said that the Kazakhstani government is preparing for all possible situations that may arise this winter in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. He explained that the government is implementing a "secret" food fund that could be used to aid its Central Asian neighbors if a food crisis arises later this year. Sarybai also noted that a new center for preventative diplomacy established in Ashgabat with UN participation could be a useful tool for promoting regional cooperation and dealing with regional problems such as food, water, and electricity.

¶4. (C) DAS Krol met separately DFM Nurlan Yermekbayev on July 24 in Almaty. Yermekbayev reiterated to Krol that FM Tazhin wants to hold off on finalizing a decision on Kazakhstan's IAEA BOG candidacy until he returns from leave. Krol informed Yermekbayev that this issue has reached the highest levels of the USG and that Under Secretary Burns plans to raise it directly with the Russians. Yermekbayev said that the Kazakhstani government would take this under consideration when making its final decision. Krol and Yermekbayev also discussed the potential food and water crises in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, as Yermekbayev was en route to Tajikistan when he met with DAS Krol. Yermekbayev agreed that the U.S. and Kazakhstan should work together in promoting stability in these two countries, and further pushed the idea of raising water security at the Ashgabat preventative diplomacy center.

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